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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AU
SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF ELECTIONS IN STYRIA AND VORARLBERG

REF: A. VIENNA A-458 B. VIENNA A-468

1. SUMMARY: CONSERVATIVE PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP), WINNING THREE SEATS IN STYRIA AND TWO IN VORARLBERG, IS CLEAR VICTOR IN BOTH CONTESTS; SOCIALIST PARTY (SPO) IS MAIN LOSER IN STYRIA AND SMALL FREEDOM PARTY (FPO) SUFFERED DEBACLE IN VARARLBERG. PEOPLE'S PARTY GAINS DUE TO STRONG PERSONALITIES AND MORE EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION OF ITS POSITION ON PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, PARTICULARLY INFLATION. ELECTIONS OUTCOME CONTINUED MODERATE TREND IN FAVOR OF OVP AND AGAINST SPO OF EARLIER PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN 1973 AND SPRING 1974. ALL THREE PARTIES WILL ANALYZE ELECTION OUTCOME FOR POSSIBLE FORECAST OF THEIR 1975 ELECTION PROSPECTS.

2. IN STYRIA, WITH 98 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE VOTING, OVP GAINED ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF SEATS BY TAKING THREE FROM SOCIALISTS. IN PERCENTAGE TERMS, OVP GAINED 4.1 PERCENT WHILE MAIN LOSER, SOCIALISTS, LOST 3.8 PERCENT AND FPO WHICH LOST 0.6 PERCENT WAS ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS BASIC MANDATE IN GRAZ, THUS ASSURING ITS CONTINUED PRESENCE IN PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT. SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
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WILL BE OVP: 31 (28 IN 1970); SPO: 23 (26); FPO:

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2 (2).

3. IN VORARLBERG, WITH 96 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE VOTING, OVP TOOK ADDITIONAL TWO SEATS AND SPO ONE, ALL AT EXPENSE OF FPO FOR WHOM ELECTION OUTCOME WAS MAJOR DEBACLE. IN PERCENTAGE TERMS OVP GAINED UNUSUALLY HIGH 6.9 PERCENT, SPO LOST 0.2 PERCENT AND FPO LOST 7.1 PERCENT OR ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF ITS VOTER SUPPORT. SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN NEXT PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT WILL BE OVP: 22 (20 IN 1969); SPO: 10 (9); FPO: 4 (7). GAIN OF ONE SEAT BY SOCIALISTS IS ACTUALLY RESULT OF NEW ELECTION SYSTEM WHICH, HAD IT BEEN IN EFFECT AT LAST ELECTIONS, SOCIALISTS WOULD HAVE HAD 10 AND OVP 19 SEATS.

4. COMMENT: COMBINATION OF STRONG PEOPLE'S PARTY PERSONALITIES HEADING PROVINCIAL TICKETS AND BETTER OVP HANDLING OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES, PARTICULARLY INFLATION AND RADIO-TV REFORM, WERE APPARENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIALIST LOSSES. POLARIZATION OF POLITICAL SCENE BETWEEN TWO MAJOR PARTIES AND THEIR HEAVY CAMPAIGN OUTLAYS APPEAR TO BE CAUSE FOR SHARP DECLINE IN FPO FORTUNES, PARTICULARLY IN VORARLBERG, TRADITIONAL FPO STRONGHOLD. ELECTION OUTCOME GIVES PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST TO OVP LEADERSHIP AND IS CLEAR WARNING TO SPO AND FPO OF NEED TO REVIEW THEIR POLICIES AND POSTURES IN PREPARATION FOR 1975 NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

DETAILED ANALYSIS FOLLOWS BY AIRGRAM.HUMES

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